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## **‘Down to the Cellar:’ the architectural setting as an embodied topography of the imagination in two films of Jan Švankmajer**

**Dagmar Motycka Weston**

### **Abstract**

The work of the well-known Czech film maker and artist Jan Švankmajer is informed by his surrealist preoccupation with the primary phenomena of embodiment, experience and the imagination. He believes that the apparently inanimate things and places which we encounter in the given world have a life of their own. Having witnessed certain events, and been touched by people in different psychic states, they accumulate memories which they are then able to communicate to us. He always emphasizes the most primary senses – in particular touch and hearing – above vision, and delights in obliterating the artificial boundary between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ experience, between reality and dream. Švankmajer often portrays the architectural settings in his films – the always animate world in which his stories are played out – as the echoes and extensions of his characters’ landscapes of the imagination, so that in some cases they almost become characters in their own right. In doing this, he is intuitively alluding to the presence of a latent world, in which human experience and imagination are situated. As with the topography of dream, the structure of places within the stories is often disjointed and disorientating. In his use of architecture, Švankmajer is particularly attuned to deep symbolic archetypes – the dark cavern, the tower, the theatre of the world – which are part of the latent world. The paper briefly examines Švankmajer’s thematic sources - particularly Mannerism and surrealism – for their understanding of the mysterious and animate nature of the experiential world. It then interprets the structure of Švankmajer’s topography in two of his short films, *Down To the Cellar* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*.



Fig. 1: Jan Švankmajer under the alchemical sign of the auroboros in front of his *Kunstkammer* in Horní Staňkov, Southern Bohemia, summer 2008. Photo by the author.



*If you are trying to decide what is more important [whether to] trust the experience of the eye or the experience of the body ... the experience of the body is more authentic, uninhabited by aestheticisation.*

Jan Švankmajer<sup>1</sup>

*For me objects always were more alive than people. More permanent and also more expressive. They are more exciting for their latent content and for their memories, which far exceed the memories of men. Objects conceal within themselves the events they have witnessed. That's why I surround myself with them and try to uncover these hidden events and experiences ... I have tried in my films to 'excavate' this content from objects, to listen to them and then illustrate their story. In my opinion, this should be the purpose of any animation: to let objects speak for themselves.*

Jan Švankmajer<sup>2</sup>

The work of the Czech surrealist film maker and artist, Jan Švankmajer, is informed by his preoccupation with the primary phenomena of embodiment, experience and the imagination [Fig. 1]. He believes that the apparently inanimate things and places which we encounter in the given world have a life and memories of their own, and speak to us. While film is primarily a visual medium, he values its power to evoke and mediate the other, more primary and primitive senses – in particular touch. True to his surrealist beliefs, Švankmajer always delights in obliterating the artificial boundary between 'inner' and 'outer' experience, and in highlighting the fantastic dimension of reality. He often portrays the architectural settings in his films – the always-animated world in which his stories are played out – as the echoes and extensions of his characters' imaginative worlds, so that in some cases they almost become characters in their own right. In doing this, he is intuitively alluding to the presence of a latent or pre-reflective world, in which human experience and imagination are situated. As with the topography of dream, the structure of places within his films is often disjointed and disorientating. In his use of architecture, Švankmajer is particularly attuned to deep symbolic archetypes or situations – the dark cavern, the street, the 'theatre of the world' – which are part of cultural memory and tradition. He believes that successful artefacts must have a plurivocity which only analogy can provide and says of his films that 'all interpretations are true.'<sup>3</sup> In this paper I will explore these themes and their phenomenological roots with respect to two of Švankmajer's short animated films, *Down to the Cellar* (*Do pivnice*, 1983) and *The Fall of the House of Usher* (*Zánik domu Usherů*, 1983).

The Prague surrealist movement has continued to exist and evolve since its origins in the 1920s. In addition to the traditional surrealist themes, its content and preoccupations are inspired by, and respond to, a local cultural context. Chief within this is the city of Prague, which André Breton once described as 'the magic capital of old Europe.'<sup>4</sup> There, reminders of a lively twentieth-century avant-garde intersperse with the rich Hermeticist, Mannerist and Baroque past that still permeates the old fabric of the centre and inform Prague's contemporary culture.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps because of the difficult political conditions in Bohemia during much of the twentieth century, surrealism, with its emphasis on the liberation of the person and of all aspects of the imagination, has retained much of its subversive



power.<sup>6</sup> With its interest in the structure of the real, surrealism has always had a strong affinity with phenomenology, especially in its critique of rationalist reductivism and of perspectival vision, and its investigations into the phenomena of pre-reflective experience.<sup>7</sup> One of the Czech surrealist group's stated aims is to investigate the 'phenomenology of the imagination.'<sup>8</sup> Švankmajer has always been faithful to the Romantic belief in the primacy of the imagination, and particularly in the artist as being possessed of a privileged, regenerative vision. He has lived his life as an expression of his surrealist ethos, rejecting materialism and seeing his creative activities not as the production of 'Art' but as a vital vehicle for self-knowledge. He has aimed – through a kind of alchemical transformation – to enrich the experience of daily life.

The affinity between film and direct experience, and film's unique potential to evoke lived space and time, have been noted since its early days. Film is constituted through temporality, spatiality and movement, and is thus able to approximate the varied textures of human experience. Cinematic techniques, such as editing and the juxtaposition of image and sound, give film a unique power to evoke the phenomenal continuity between the inner and the outer experience, between 'reality' and the imagination, which has been identified by phenomenological study. It also has a mysterious power to partake in the intercommunication of the senses in the unity of the perceiving body.

### **The latent world of experience**

The power of Švankmajer's best films rests to a large extent in his marvellous, intuitive ability to evoke and articulate some of the deep structures of the pre-reflective or latent world. Phenomenology sees human life as being deeply rooted in the web of references and meanings, or the constant, implicit background that is the world of daily experience:

That the primary domain of experience, its unity and order, is already established on a pre-reflective level is a direct challenge to the conventional view, which attributes that unity and order to intellectual synthesis ... In much the same way as the world of praxis, the pre-reflective world is structured as a qualitative and communicative reality that is only to a limited extent accessible to reflective understanding. The implicit (tacit) level of the pre-reflective world is highly structured, but not articulated in a way possible to express in language and thought.<sup>9</sup>

Dalibor Vesely has reinterpreted this key phenomenological theme through the notion of situations. There are certain typical, durable, even archetypal structures in daily life (such as sitting down to eat, or reading in a library) which are informed by the universal conditions of human existence and which, over time, crystallize experience and tradition. Together they comprise the latent world:

The latent world, which is the origin of dream, represents the reality of the world in its most natural and complete givenness. The key to this givenness is the inexhaustible richness of articulated experience contained in concrete situations in which we always find ourselves. Situations are the framework in which our experience is sedimented, finds its identity, and makes possible the origin of cultural memory.<sup>10</sup>



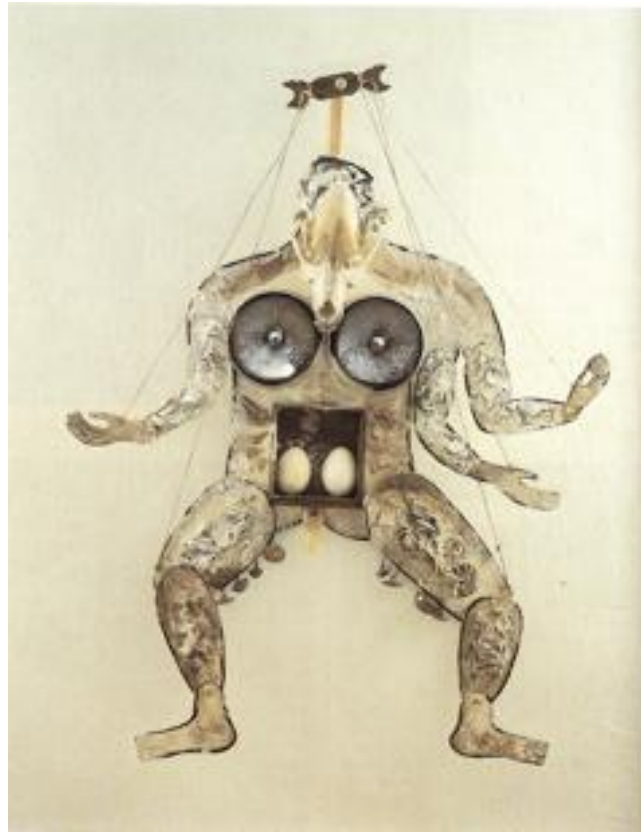


Fig. 2: Jan Švankmajer, *The Androgyne*, puppet, 1990. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer.

Within the pre-reflective world of given experience our understanding of the order of things is animated by a multitude of latent affinities and correspondences. Imperceptible to reductivist rationalism, these are open to expression through poetic thinking and metaphor. This means that things within the world are constantly communicating with each other on many levels. Such aspects of the latent world can be articulated or made explicit through the works of art or architecture. To describe the texture of this communicative field by means of analogy has frequently been the aim of surrealist art. It is well illustrated, for example, by the *frottages* and collages of Max Ernst, or by the works of Švankmajer himself [Fig. 2].<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the understanding of things in the world (and of nature itself) as animate, even sentient entities, which played such an important role in Hermeticism and Mannerist culture, for example, can be traced back to such a communicative structure of the latent world. The phenomenal continuity between inner, imaginative (supposedly 'subjective') and outer (supposedly 'objective') experience can be traced to the same origins.<sup>12</sup> This is a world-view that Švankmajer has always sought to express in his works. His characteristic deployment of a mixture of live action and stop-motion animation in itself suggests this seamless blending in experience of the 'plausible' side of reality and that where fantasy and dream take over.



The 'Phenomenology of the Imagination' in Švankmajer's films – *Down to the Cellar (Do pivnice)*



Fig. 3: Jan Švankmajer, *Down to the Cellar*. Courtesy of Slovak Film Institute.

I would now like to turn my attention to two of Švankmajer's films to explore the ways in which he seeks to evoke and reflect the imaginative worlds of his characters. The short film *Down to the Cellar* is close to his heart, and one that he describes as particularly autobiographical.<sup>13</sup> It is loosely based on the popular folktale of Červená Karkulka (Little Red Riding Hood), with a vulnerable child heroine who is also resourceful, determined and brave.<sup>14</sup> Drawing on this disturbing archetypal situation, the film is at once an account and a memory of traumatic childhood experience, and also an exploration of something more universal: the dark underworld of the human imagination, represented here by the primary symbol of the cellar. It is thickly laced with black and objective humour, dear to the surrealists.<sup>15</sup> The film concerns a pre-adolescent girl's journey into the basement store of an old apartment building to fetch potatoes. Typically used for the storage of coal, wood and foodstuffs over the winter, such cellars were usually built of brick, with wood-slat compartments lining long windowless corridors. They are an immediately recognizable, very palpable part of the shared childhood memory for many central European city dwellers. Švankmajer himself recollects such a basement in the building where he grew up in the Vršovice district of Prague, and being sent there as a child on similar errands.<sup>16</sup> The film is a seamless blending of reality and nightmarish visions conjured by the imagination of a child, as during her journey the girl encounters a series of fantastic subterranean creatures, uncooperative and aggressive objects, and strange, menacing characters.<sup>17</sup> The blending of fantasy and animated sequences with the apparently mundane is very effective here in extending the boundaries of the real.



### The dark cellar archetype

The central archetypal situation in the film is that of the dark subterranean cavern. The cave is one of the primary symbols that arise spontaneously from our contact and reconciliation with the primordial, cosmic conditions of our existence that are present for us in the latent world. This theme has a rich symbolic tradition in myth, linked (as in the story of the Cretan labyrinth) with the hero's initiatory confrontation of primary dark forces and fears, and ultimately also with regeneration [Figs 3-4].<sup>18</sup> The deep symbolic content of buildings (and in particular of the dwelling) as analogous to the imagination and the locus of reverie has been memorably explored by writers such as Gaston Bachelard and Mircea Eliade.<sup>19</sup> Švankmajer's interpretation of this *topos* is, however, rooted in a psychoanalytical understanding. He is evidently interested in the Freudian overtones of the cavern as the unconscious that contains bizarre, threatening and latent sexual elements, and where the light of day cannot penetrate to dispel primeval fears.<sup>20</sup> As in his later film *Otesánek* (2000), where the monstrous tree-creature Otík is imprisoned in a similar cellar and begins to devour visitors, the cavern is a setting for potentially horrific events beyond the control of reason. The ordinary wood-slat partitions take on the connotations of prison bars, or of chinked walls through which hidden interiors can be glimpsed. The power of the image of the cellar in the film is greatly intensified by the daily familiarity of the setting to its audience.<sup>21</sup>



Fig. 4: Jan Švankmajer, *Down to the Cellar*, the cavern. Courtesy of Slovak Film Institute.

### The frustration of vision

To represent the world of the cellar and to convey the feeling of the girl's perplexing and frightening experiences, the spatiality of the film is often characterized by ambiguity and a lack of visual definition. The theme of the visual disorientation which accompanies heightened corporeal states of arousal or fear was among those explored by artists working within the surrealist sphere, such as André Masson and Pablo Picasso [Fig. 5]. It is given a distinctive treatment in Švankmajer's film. An overall or outside view of the building or its layout is never shown.







Fig. 5: Pablo Picasso, *The Embrace*, 1933. © Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2011.

Once the girl descends below the ground floor into the realm of shadow, the space in which she moves is fractured and disorientating, with connections and escape routes obscured by darkness. The moment when she first enters the cellar is a good example of this. With her diminutive hand she pushes the enormous wooden door, which opens with an echoing creak. She turns on her torch and uses it, shakily, to explore the entirely dark, decaying brick interior. The torch light shines forward, but also seems to illuminate her face from below, giving it a ghostly, distorted appearance.<sup>22</sup> The cone of torch light (and the camera) now follow the movement of her gaze, rapidly picking out of the gloom a series of disconnected details – an old tap, a wall recess, something unidentifiable in the corner. The darkness here has a double function: it obscures the visual image, stimulating the action of the imagination and, on a deeper level, it alludes to the symbolism of the primordial darkness or chaos. A partly glimpsed series of wall meters takes on in the gloom the appearance of fabulous monsters which inhabit the underworld. Such menacing creatures soon appear in the concrete form of the scuttling, toothy-mouthed shoes which fight noisily over the girl's dropped bread roll. She then sees a ceiling bulb and turns it on. Later on, she encounters the sinister versions of two neighbours who were introduced earlier in the film, transformed by dark imaginings.<sup>23</sup> The sequence which follows is a particularly powerful example of the visual disorientation which often accompanies the primary experience of intense arousal or fear. The girl runs breathlessly through a passage. The action is filmed through the slatted screen of the partition, which makes the image of her flight fragmented and incomplete. There is a strong sense of disorientation (hers and ours) when she stops and turns around, as blows and a strange mixture of a child's and dog's yelping cries are heard. She then unlocks and rushes into her own compartment with extended arms, apparently to save herself from being attacked by chopped wood.<sup>24</sup> As the fight subsides, the girl looks around and realizes she has perhaps seen reflections in a mirror. These running and fighting scenes are edited as a rapid succession of short segments. They have a sketchy, indeterminate quality which *suggests* rather than fully describes what is happening, expressing also the girl's own fear and agitation.<sup>25</sup>







Fig. 6: Jan Švankmajer, *Down to the Cellar*. Courtesy of Slovak Film Institute.  
The shrinking girl and giant cat.

The spatiality of the cellar is inward looking and also at times corporeally disorientating.<sup>26</sup> In its dark corridors, only small portions of the route become illuminated along the journey, and one can only see a few steps ahead. There are also logical disjunctions in the continuity of this space. This evokes the irrational and episodic quality of dream. When denied a comprehensive visual image, the imagination is free to invent. Hidden, labyrinthine corridors branching off the main route are suggested. As vision is restricted, the other senses – hearing, touch and, to a lesser extent, the smell of smoke and of mustiness – come into their own in describing this subterranean region. The film contains no music, but from the beginning an aural landscape – a mixture of apparently real, recognizable sounds – takes over from the visible in giving this place its distinct and very palpable character. The lack of dialogue adds to the universality of the situation. When the girl pushes open the creaking door to enter the dark world of the cellar, the ordinary daily sounds of the building subside, replaced by the exaggeratedly loud sounds of the cavern. The shuffling of her tentative footsteps is intensified, while the dripping of water echoes in the darkness, conjuring up an unseen cavernous space. The camera lingers on some pipes attached to the brick walls, and this is accompanied by a deafening sound of a toilet flush and water rushing down the pipes. Švankmajer also uses scale disjunction effectively to suggest the topsy-turvy nature of this hidden world.<sup>27</sup> Towards the end of the film, through a mixture of a high viewpoint and the inter-cutting of the cat in a small-scale model of the cellar, he has the animal become gigantic and threatening, completely filling the passage and pursuing the terrified the girl. The rising camera angle at this point also makes the converse true: the girl shrinks, Alice-like, to a tiny size [Fig. 6]. Thus the spatial settings and the camera technique of the film contribute to the powerful evocation of the phenomenal structure of the character's over-active imagination, and remind us effectively of our own primary experiences of fear.



*Zánik domu Usherů (The Fall of the House of Usher)*

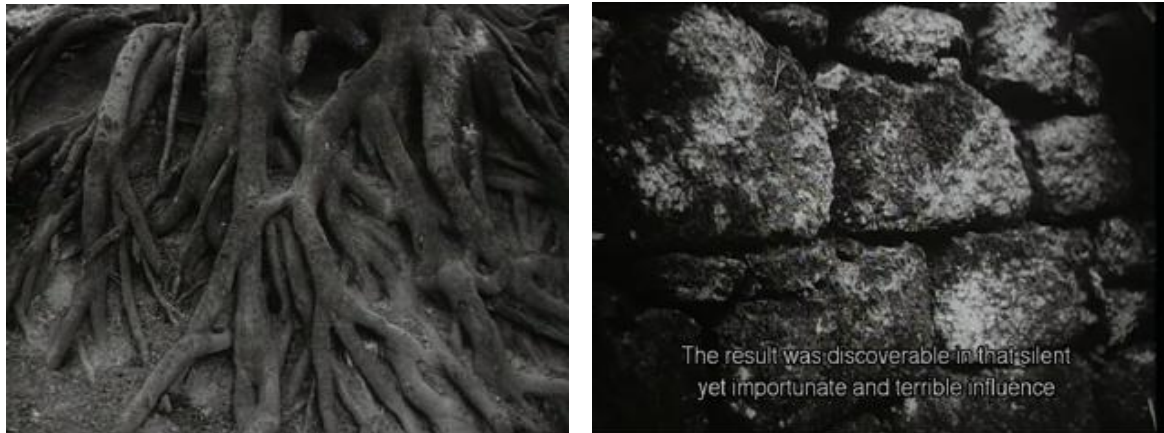


Fig. 7: Jan Švankmajer, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer.  
The correspondences of the 'sentient' landscape.

Švankmajer made his adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's story of 'The Fall of the House of Usher' in 1980 when, having been banned by the communist authorities from making films on his own themes for the past seven years, he turned his attention to the presumably less contentious source material of the classics. However, the resulting film adaptation has a powerfully disturbing, surrealistically subversive effect. Poe's story is a particularly macabre example of Gothic fiction's preoccupation with intense atmosphere and turmoil, and lends itself well to a cinematic interpretation through the use of analogy.<sup>28</sup> It is a study of all-pervading bodily malaise, and the eventual disintegration of the central character into madness and death. An intense atmosphere of unease is conjured up in the story, often through the evocation of sensory experience, with the damned Usher clan personified by the landscape, architectural setting and objects of their estate. The story partakes of the Romantic tradition of the ruin, where melancholy crumbling architecture often evokes the power of natural forces and the futility of human resistance. Poe makes quite clear the archetypal analogy between the building and the imaginative world of the characters, and this becomes a focus for Švankmajer. The story begins with an anonymous narrator who is called to visit a childhood friend, Roderick Usher, at his family seat, to find him in a condition reminiscent of that of the decaying house. It has little plot. Instead its power lies in the intense evocation of an indeterminate anxiety.<sup>29</sup> This climaxes with the chilling revelation of the premature entombment in an underground vault on the estate of Usher's ailing twin sister Lady Madeline, and the subsequent collapse of both the family and of the house into the surrounding swamp. Švankmajer tells the story without the use of actors, except for the vivid voiceover reading of Poe's abridged text by Petr Čepek.<sup>30</sup> It is the landscape and the house themselves which become the film's most vivid characters. In the context of the phenomenology of the imagination, the film is also remarkable for its evocation of corporeal experience through visual image, sound and the visualization of touch.





Figs 8-9: Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Portrait of Rudolf II as Vertumnus*, (the Roman god of seasonal change), 1592. Reproduced by permission of Skokloster Castle Museum, Sweden. Waldstein Palace garden, Prague, early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### The life of inanimate things

Švankmajer was drawn to this story because he remembered its powerful atmosphere, and because his own feelings about the strangely sentient character of inanimate things accorded with that expressed by Poe.<sup>31</sup> He believes that the apparently inanimate things and places that we encounter in the given world have a life of their own. Having witnessed certain events, and been touched by people in different situations, they accumulate memories and emotional imprints which they are then able to communicate to us.<sup>32</sup> This is also one of the reasons why he is drawn to such expressions of ambivalent animation as Mannerist curiosities, puppets and the Golem legend. Finding and giving expression to the latent life in inanimate matter is, of course, the essence of animation, as Švankmajer observes.<sup>33</sup> He saw the Poe story in terms of the animated swamp and the life of stones, both expressive of an unmotivated, pervasive horror.<sup>34</sup> In the story, Usher notes the sentient quality of both organic and inorganic things, evoking the powerful atmosphere of the ancient grey stones of the home of his forefathers covered with fungi and surrounded by decaying trees, reflected in the surrounding tarn. This atmosphere permeated the waters, walls and the whole fabric of the estate, having a malignant effect on the psychic state of the family.<sup>35</sup> This passage of the text is accompanied in the film by images of natural elements, such as tree roots, bark and moving mud, evocative of animal and even human attributes [Fig. 7].<sup>36</sup> Švankmajer is immersed in the world-view of Rudolfine Prague. In Mannerist and early Baroque culture the world order was seen as one great unbroken chain of being, whose elements were animated by analogies and correspondences, and in which the metamorphic powers of nature were revered and imitated by human craftsmen [Figs 8-9].<sup>37</sup> He has always emphasized the latently animate or anthropomorphic nature of daily things in all aspects of his work.<sup>38</sup> This view corresponds to a notable phenomenon of perception, in which the rigid boundaries between rational categories of objects do not pertain. The latent world of human experience, as we



saw, is structured through analogy and characterized by a myriad of correspondences connecting all things. This sensibility pervaded European culture until the advent of modern reductive scientific rationality, and was embraced later by the surrealists.



Fig. 10: Jan Švankmajer, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer. The 'tour' of the house.

Švankmajer sees animation precisely as a way of bringing this mysterious life of things to the surface.<sup>39</sup> His interpretation of the Poe story is to a large extent based on this idea. The landscape and the house itself are linked and remarkably animated. In the opening sequence, the hoof prints of the visitor's invisible horse appear in the process of being stamped into the muddy ground, suggesting an imprint on a living memory. The house briefly appears reflected on the rippling surface of the water, mingling with its flotsam. This sequence also contains extreme close up images of a raven's head with the bird's alert eye.<sup>40</sup> The next sequence, in which the voiceover reading introduces the house, is accompanied by a kind of visual tour. Here the agitated camera enters the building and glides rapidly around its semi-ruined fabric, scanning its once noble but now decrepit features, its lens becoming the visitor's gaze [Fig. 10]. It proceeds from a heavy gothic cellar to the upstairs rooms, passing through doors that open creakily before it.<sup>41</sup> The camera looks obliquely up at the door lintels and ceilings, producing a sense of vertiginous movement and occasional disorientation. The text then turns to a description of the altered condition of Roderick Usher, who is here personified by an ornately carved, dark wooden chair. The camera begins slowly to explore the detail of the chair, gliding over a series of round carvings that are reminiscent of the raven's eye we saw earlier [Fig. 11]. The suggestion here is that, like the chair, the raven too is an evocation of the house of Usher. The watchful bird of the opening scenes disintegrates in the final animated sequence of the film into a pile of feathers and straw stuffing. The analogy between two such unrelated things as a bird and a carved ornament is facilitated by the poetic ambiguity of the black and white film.<sup>42</sup> The unseen Madeline Usher is likewise personified by a series of apparently animate, evocative objects. She is associated with a decrepit door through which she leaves and later re-enters. Her closed coffin is seen





proceeding by itself to her burial place, her features etch themselves into the walls of the house, and her name appears in the dry mud and leaves, giving them each their most explicitly anthropomorphic aspect.<sup>43</sup> At one point we see the skeletal face of death inscribing itself onto the wall of the house [Fig. 12]. During the final cataclysmic scenes of the film, we also see wood shattering horribly into a pile of splinters, metal sheeting wrenching itself off wood doors, tree roots wrestling in the writhing mud, and furniture leaping from the windows to sink into the swampy waters below, the distress and disintegration of objects echoing that of human beings [Fig. 13]. Most notably, however, the dramatic life of apparently inert matter is suggested by an innovative sequence of animated clay that coincides with Usher's singing of the poem 'The Haunted Palace,' which foreshadows his own descent into madness.



Fig. 11: Jan Švankmajer, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer.  
The raven's head and Usher's chair



Fig. 12: Jan Švankmajer, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer.  
The face of death on the wall.





Fig. 13: Jan Švankmajer, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer. The final collapse, tree roots wrestling in the swamp.

### The inter-communication of the senses

The surrealist movement has often been critical of the dominance in modern culture of vision over the other senses. The perspective illusionism, associated with a degraded, reductivist conception of lived vision, was often dismantled in surrealist works in favour of a non-perspectival spatiality structured through the fragment. Surrealist objects and exhibition designs devised a variety of means of involving the other senses, with tactility playing a primary role.<sup>44</sup> In the same spirit Švankmajer has dedicated a number of years to intensive personal explorations – often through games, surveys and the hands-on experimentation with friends within the surrealist group – of the role of the tactile in the human imagination [Fig. 14].<sup>45</sup> At the time of this work, he was intuitively aware of the findings of modern phenomenology in this domain.<sup>46</sup> He increasingly came to see touch as the most ‘corporeal’ and primordial of the senses, the one thorough which ‘from birth we seek a sense of emotional security in the tactile contact with the mother’s body’ and the means of our ‘first emotional contact with the world.’<sup>47</sup> Švankmajer speaks of the need to divest hands of their narrowly utilitarian function, and to cultivate their use as instruments of tactile communication. The wish to bring touch into play in his films in a significant way initially seemed paradoxical, as film appeared at first to be a mainly audiovisual medium. He found Poe’s psychological studies very rich in the evocations of tactile experience, and particularly the way in which it is intensified in times of psychic distress.<sup>48</sup> In reading Poe’s work he realized that tactile imagination does not depend exclusively on direct contact between our own body and things, but can be mediated through the other senses.<sup>49</sup> In this way, he sought to bridge the antagonism between the subject and object, and to endow his films with a dimension of embodiment.<sup>50</sup> In *Anima Animus Animace* he referred to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose study of the phenomenology of perception cast doubt on the notion that touch was possible exclusively through the direct tactile contact with an object.<sup>51</sup> In *Hmat a Imaginace* (1994), Švankmajer compiled a wide-ranging anthology of ‘tactile art,’ some of which, like the materially suggestive paintings of Jan Van Eyck, very effectively communicated the tactile experience of material and texture through visual means.<sup>52</sup> He further expounded the phenomenon of what he called ‘tactile memory,’ which ‘reaches into the most remote corners of our childhood; from there it





springs in the form of analogies at the slightest tactile stimulus or the provocation of tactile imagination, and thus enables 'tactile art' to communicate.'<sup>53</sup>



Fig. 14: Jan Švankmajer, *The Tyranny of Utilitarianism (The Tactile Chair)*, 1977. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer. This is one of a wide range of tactile objects made by Švankmajer during the 1970s.

Švankmajer's views on tactile experience are comparable to those of phenomenology. Speaking of painting, Merleau-Ponty notes the pre-reflective way in which in perception some works of art have the power to offer to our sight 'its inward tapestries, the imaginary texture of the real.'<sup>54</sup> According to him, the body 'is borne towards tactile experience by all its surfaces and all its organs simultaneously, and carries with it a certain typical structure of the tactile world.'<sup>55</sup> It is this pre-existing structure of the latent, tactile world, on which Švankmajer's film relies. Merleau-Ponty also emphasized the essential interconnectedness of the senses as part of a unified body in direct experience: 'there is not in the normal subject a tactile experience and also a visual one, but an integrated experience to which it is impossible to gauge the contribution of each sense.'<sup>56</sup> He noted that the 'unity and identity of the tactile phenomenon do not come about through any synthesis of recognition in the concept, they are founded upon the unity and identity of the body as a *synergic totality*.'<sup>57</sup> In other words, tactile stimuli are informed by the other senses (and also by memory and the imagination) as part of the essential unity of the body.<sup>58</sup> This accounts for the synaesthetic nature of perception. Our body's grasp of the unified tactile structure of things makes it possible for us to 'see' and 'hear' their material qualities. 'The senses intercommunicate by opening on to the structure of the thing. One sees the hardness and brittleness of glass, and when, with a tinkling sound, it breaks, this sound is conveyed by the visible glass,' Merleau-Ponty wrote.<sup>59</sup> Phenomenological studies thus confirm Švankmajer's view.



### Tactility in *The Fall of the House of Usher*



Fig. 15: Jan Švankmajer, *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Reproduced by permission of Jan Švankmajer. The gesture animated in clay: the visualization of touch.

Švankmajer's preoccupation with tactile experience was fully translated into film for the first time in the *Fall of the House of Usher*. Throughout, visual images and sounds are used to evoke imaginative experience. However, the sequence of animated clay, which coincides with Usher's song, is an explicit attempt to induce – via the visual sequence of animated hand gestures – an intense corporeal involvement of the audience through the palpably tactile experience [Fig. 15]. In the film, as the narrator recalls the verses of the poem 'The Haunted Palace,' an armful of potter's clay appears to spring from a well, and fly through the window into the house, where it proceeds to be kneaded by many invisible hands.<sup>60</sup> Švankmajer speaks of his interpretation of this important moment in the story, the analogical foreshadowing of Usher's madness, by conjuring up the character's nervous tension through the means of a series of "tensional" hand gestures imprinted into the clay.<sup>61</sup> Here it must be recalled that in addition to making films, Švankmajer is also an artist and ceramic sculptor, used to making and expressing things with his hands. At an early stage in the sequence, recognizable hand prints appear in the clay but the shapes quickly become more complicated and abstract. During the serene early verses of the poem, the impressions in the clay are relatively shallow, and the surprising, unearthly movement is gentle and largely symmetrical. The musical accompaniment – the plucking of (Usher's) guitar – is gentle and melodious. However, as the verses turn to the alarming psychic disintegration of the king in the poem, the movement of the clay becomes more violent and erratic, with deep grooves and extreme close ups. One is aware of the physical force required to manipulate the clay. Towards the end the tumultuous clay suggests a monstrous devouring maw. The accompanying music (backed up now by a dissonant *glissando* on the strings, resembling the buzzing of angry wasps) evokes the 'discordant melody' mentioned in the poem. The film's soundscape, incidentally, also relies on the phenomenal interdependence of the senses, with sound interacting with visual imagery to produce bodily experience.<sup>62</sup> The unsettling device of the clay animation is very effective at conveying – through the visualization of tactile gesture – the sense of bodily turmoil, and is



one of Švankmajer's most original contributions to animation. It is debatable, however, whether this effectiveness was initially due more to its strangeness and novelty, than to its communication of tactile stress.<sup>63</sup> *The Fall of the House of Usher* was one of the most powerful and innovative of Švankmajer's films of the 1980s, with its themes of the tactile and madness opening up new domains for his creativity.<sup>64</sup>



Fig. 16: Jan Švankmajer in his *Kunstkammer*. Photo by the author.

What is the significance of Švankmajer's work to architecture? In exploring the topography of the imagination, his work asserts the unity of experience in the world, and the constant inter-communication of our senses, memory and imagination. In the two examples explored here, Švankmajer confirms the very dominant position of architectural places and situations, with their archetypal dimension, as the primary symbolic currency of our lives. He also implicitly celebrates the richness of the material imagination of the world that we inhabit. His films illuminate the importance of analogy and metaphor in perception and thus also in architecture, if the latter is to provide us with existential orientation.

There has been much written recently on the possible relationship between surrealism and architecture.<sup>65</sup> Some of this has focused on the *formal* similarities between buildings and surrealist art.<sup>66</sup> This somewhat facile, 'Mae-West-lips-sofa' style of interpretation, has positivistic overtones. It focuses on the most superficial aspects of both, and tends to treat them in formal, aesthetic terms. Such an approach was always rejected by the more philosophically aware among the surrealists, who argued that their work was not 'art' and should not be aestheticized.<sup>67</sup> In his best work, by looking at the textures of the experiential world, Švankmajer points the way towards an altogether subtler, more profound interpretation. I would argue that an approach like his, which explores the very textures of the material imagination (or the ontological dimensions of human existence), represents a much more



meaningful lesson about the potential communicative power of architecture, and its profound importance in our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Švankmajer, 'Decalogue,' in *Dark Alchemy: The Cinema of Jan Švankmajer*, ed. Peter Hames, Wallflower Press, London, 2008, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Švankmajer, in *Afterimage 13: Animating the Fantastic*, ed. Simon Field, London, c. 1986, 33.

<sup>3</sup> 'Interview with Jan Švankmajer,' in *Dark Alchemy*, 139. I am very grateful to Jan Švankmajer for allowing me such generous access to his home, work and thought.

<sup>4</sup> André Breton, 'Surrealist Situation of the Object,' (1935), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1969, 255.

<sup>5</sup> While connections with French surrealism were cultivated during the interwar years, there is much in Czech surrealism that is firmly rooted in the cultural and literary traditions of Central Europe. The Czech puppeteer tradition, folklore, the legends of Dr Faustus and the Golem, and an Expressionist sensibility, for example, play a palpable role.

<sup>6</sup> The totalitarian authorities saw surrealism as incompatible with positivistic communist ideology and censored its work. Today, the surrealists continue to act as a cultural conscience, questioning the authenticity and values of a culture eagerly embracing the Western model of consumerist materialism. See for example Švankmajer's critique of 'our sick civilization' in his text 'Lekce Faust,' *Analogon*, 7/IV, 1992, 75-6.

<sup>7</sup> This closeness between surrealism and phenomenology is particularly strong, perhaps, in the Central European context, where the philosophical ideas of Edmund Husserl and Jan Patočka still inform the culture. André Breton frequently referred to surrealism's interest in the phenomena of direct experience, and after the war he explicitly acknowledged a certain affinity between a surrealist outlook and some of the ideas of Martin Heidegger. See André Breton, *Entretiens*, Gallimard, Paris, 1969, 258.

<sup>8</sup> Petr Kral, 'Questions to Jan Švankmajer,' in *Afterimage 13*, 32.

<sup>9</sup> Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*, MIT, Cambridge, Mass., 2004, 82-83. He further argues that the term 'latent world' is to be understood to mean the totality of references with which we are always involved and which are most conspicuously articulated in language, 456.

<sup>10</sup> Dalibor Vesely, 'Surrealismus a latentní realita snu,' pre-publication draft, c. 2008, 2 (author's translation).

<sup>11</sup> On the power of the collaged fragment to structure a communicative field, see Dagmar Motycka Weston, 'Le Corbusier and the Restorative Fragment at the Swiss Pavilion,' in *Tracing Modernity*, eds Christian Hermansen and Mari Hvattum, Routledge, London, 2004, 173-94.

<sup>12</sup> The site of my experience when I am, for example, sitting at a window and looking out is impossible to pin down as either within or outside me. My perceiving body participates in the street scene below, and that scene enters and interacts with the 'inner' reality of my thought, reverie and memory.



<sup>13</sup> 'Interview with Jan Švankmajer,' in *Dark Alchemy*, 123. *Do pivnice* also bears many similarities with the story of *Alice in Wonderland*, another of Švankmajer's perennial interests and subject of a later feature film. In Czech the film is often known as *Do sklepa*.

<sup>14</sup> The little girl, beautifully played by Monika Belo-Cabanová, is dressed in a red dress and shoes, and we see a red beret hanging in her apartment.

<sup>15</sup> Švankmajer sees a sarcastic sensibility and the liberal use of black and objective humour as chief traits of Czech (as opposed to the more lyrical French) surrealism. 'Interview with Jan Švankmajer,' in *Dark Alchemy*, 110.

<sup>16</sup> By the time of making the film, it was difficult to find an authentic, unmodernized cellar of this sort in Prague. This was one of the reasons that the film was made in Bratislava. Jan Švankmajer in conversation with the author, June 2008. See also *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>17</sup> The content of the film is as follows: the small, blond girl with plaits, chewing on a crescent roll, leaves her apartment and walks down a winding stone staircase to fetch potatoes from the cellar. On her way she encounters two neighbours, the first of whom is a middle-aged man who smiles at her and produces a wrapped sweet from behind her ear. The second is a woman washing the stairs and looking at her disapprovingly. Both notice the number of the cellar key in her basket. At the entry to the cellar the girl is joined by a black cat. She turns on her torch as she descends into the darkness. Several tooth-mouthed shoes scurry around the corridors. She sees an unmanned shovel loading coal into a container. She then sees the male neighbour in his pyjamas in one of the compartments. He gargles, gets onto a bed and covers himself with coal. He then motions to her to join him in an adjoining child's cot. There is a bucket of wrapped sweets nearby. Backing up in fear, she sees the infernal figure of the woman neighbour in the compartment behind her, waving her arms alarmingly around a smoking, flaming stove. The woman begins to make dough out of coal dust, eggs and water, and cutting out briquette shapes reminiscent of *buchty* (familiar Czech yeast pastry), which she then bakes in the coal burning stove. The finished briquettes are added into the coal bucket and used as fresh fuel. As the woman sees the girl, she selects a briquette, sprinkles it with sugar and goes to hand it to her. This is followed by a disorientating sequence in which the girl runs toward her own compartment. She opens the potato chest and struggles to fill her basket, while the potatoes keep escaping back into their container. The black cat we saw earlier meows menacingly and grows to gigantic size. Looking down a long corridor, the girl is overtaken by a group of scurrying coal bins, and is pursued by the giant cat. She runs toward the safety of the light. She drops her basket and the potatoes escape back into the darkness. She sits down dejected on the cellar stairs. She garners her strength and goes back down, followed by the cat.

<sup>18</sup> The cellar here may also be compared to the dark wood in the Little Red Riding Hood tale (or even to the wolf's belly). Mircea Eliade has noted the common structure and themes of folk tales and myth. See for example his *Myth and Reality*, Harper & Row, New York, 1963, Appendix 1. Myths themselves are interpretations of cosmic symbols and play an essential role in situations. In Švankmajer's own work, the cavern is often linked with the alchemical laboratory.

<sup>19</sup> See for example Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1994 and Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, Harvill Press, London, 1961.

<sup>20</sup> Švankmajer's admiration for the work of Freud is well known, and his most recent feature film, *Surviving Life*, is based on the themes of psychoanalysis and dream. In a Freudian manner, he believes in and speaks about the existence of the 'unconscious,' the vital spring of which dreams are the most notable manifestations, and he often refers to it also in his work (conversation with the author, June 2008). This is at odds with a phenomenological view that sees the notion of a dichotomy of personal conscious and unconscious as tainted by nineteenth-century positivism, and which understands all human experience, including dreams and primary symbols, as arising from the latent world.



<sup>21</sup> 'The deeper you enter into the fantastic story the more realistic you need to be in the detail,' said Švankmajer of his emphasis on the recognizable detail of the everyday world in his films. See, *Dark Alchemy*, 141.

<sup>22</sup> This is just one example of the masterly lighting that is so important to the atmosphere of the whole film.

<sup>23</sup> See endnote 17.

<sup>24</sup> The impact of this sequence is intensified, as elsewhere, by 'real animation.' In this Švankmajer animates live actors by the stop-motion technique, to create a slightly jerky, otherworldly movement that gives the scene a sense of heightened strangeness, or to accentuate the ambiguity between living and inorganic things.

<sup>25</sup> Švankmajer's use of rapid editing to create a sense of bodily disorientation and agitation is reminiscent of the use of montage in Russian constructivist cinema, which he cites as one of his early interests.

<sup>26</sup> This is particularly the case with a later sequence, where the uncooperative potatoes seem to defy gravity in rolling *up* the side of the wooden chest (and one imagines how the animation must have been done on a horizontal surface).

<sup>27</sup> The opening credits sequence, for example, shows the front door of the girl's apartment, which appears to open by itself. It is only in the next shot that we realize that the person leaving it is a child, and below the visual field of the camera.

<sup>28</sup> Švankmajer made illuminating comments on his thinking about this film in an interview with Vratislav Effenberger, reprinted as 'Švankmajer on the *The Fall of the House of Usher*,' in *Afterimage* 13, 33-37. Here he noted that many naturalistic adaptations of the Poe story had failed, and that from the beginning he chose to take a very different approach.

<sup>29</sup> In this context one is reminded of Martin Heidegger's view of indeterminate anxiety as a primary state of attunement with the world. See his *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962, Part 1, Chapters V and VI.

<sup>30</sup> Petr Čepek was later very effective in the eponymous role of Švankmajer's film *Lekce Faust*, during the making of which the actor suffered great pain and died, reflecting what Švankmajer considers to have been the film's uncannily ill fortune.

<sup>31</sup> J. Š., 'Švankmajer on the *The Fall of the House of Usher*,' 33. The surrealists saw Poe as one of their precursors. André Breton called him a 'Surrealist in adventure,' André Breton, *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, ed. F. Rosemont, Pluto Press, London, 1989, 372.

<sup>32</sup> Jan Švankmajer in conversation with the author, 2008. See also endnote 2.

<sup>33</sup> Švankmajer, 'Švankmajer on the *The Fall of the House of Usher*.'

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Fall of the House of Usher,' in *The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe*, Baltimore, 1850, Vol. 1, 301-02, [www.eapoe.org/works/tales/usher.htm](http://www.eapoe.org/works/tales/usher.htm). accessed 26 May 2010.

<sup>36</sup> On a different level, correspondences are also suggested between the house and swamp, and between the house, the landscape and Roderick Usher.

<sup>37</sup> See Simeon K. Heninger, Jr, *The Cosmographical Glass. Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe*, Huntington Library Press, San Marino, Ca., 1977. See also D. Motycka Weston, "Worlds in





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Miniature.” Some Reflections on Scale and the Microcosmic Meaning of Cabinets of Curiosities,’ *Architectural Research Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 37-49.

<sup>38</sup> This principle, which pervaded the culture of curiosities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is also one which Švankmajer has embraced in the organization of his own *Kunstkammer* in Horní Staňkov.

<sup>39</sup> See endnote 2. Quotation reproduced at beginning of this article.

<sup>40</sup> The raven has a rich iconographic tradition of which Švankmajer is aware, both in alchemy and as a sinister or magic element in Central European fairy tales.

<sup>41</sup> Here the image of a winter landscape seen through a window suggests the continuity between the house and its setting, and between the inner and outer world of Usher.

<sup>42</sup> The use in this film of black and white photography accentuates the phenomenal continuity between all things in the latent world. Inspired by the work of surrealist photographers such as Emila Medková, Švankmajer has always delighted in the depictions of shadowy stairs and corridors, evocative surface textures, and chance conjunctions of fragments to be found during an urban stroll. His 1965 film, *J.S. Bach: Fantasia G moll*, which was dedicated to Medková and which highlights the infinite variety and melancholy richness of the run-down streets and cracking stucco walls of Prague by setting them against Bach’s music, is the best example of this trend in his work. The elimination of colour enables one to focus on the patterns of light and shadow, and makes analogical kinship between disparate things more evident. In the *Fall of the House of Usher*, the rich spectrum from black to white in addition evokes the gloomy, turbulent atmosphere of Expressionist and of Gothic genre cinema. Darkness, making clear vision difficult, is a very important component here, and is at times relieved by the blindingly bright flashes of lightning.

<sup>43</sup> This sequence is reminiscent of surrealist ‘assisted ready-mades,’ in which found objects or surfaces are subtly altered to amplify their qualities or extend their meaning. The animated manipulation of wall surfaces goes back to some of Švankmajer’s earlier films, such as *J.S. Bach: Fantasia G moll*, 1965.

<sup>44</sup> The ocularcentric bias in modern culture has been discussed, for example, by Juhani Pallasmaa in his *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, Wiley-Academy, Chichester, 2005, and in David M. Levin, ed, *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993. The surrealists’ early awareness of the problem is evident in their rejection of perspectival illusionism in their art and writing. See for example D. Motycka Weston, ‘Surrealist Paris: The Non-Perspectival Space of the Lived City,’ in A. Pérez-Gómez, S. Parcell, eds, *Chora 2: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, McGill – Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 1996, 136-149, and. ‘Giorgio de Chirico: The Phenomenal Temporality in his Metaphysical Painting,’ in K. Lippincott and C. Heck, eds, in *The Symbols of Time in the History of Art*, Brepols, London, 2002, 177-192. As early as 1920, on the occasion of the Max Ernst exhibition in Paris, Breton declared that the ‘belief in an absolute time and space [of perspectivity] seems to be vanishing,’ to be supplanted by the richer, non-perspectival spatiality of collage and film. André Breton, *What is Surrealism?*, Franklin Rosemont, ed., Pluto Press, London, 1989, p. 7. In addition to such highly tactile surrealist objects as Méret Oppenheim’s *Fur Cup and Spoon* or Marcel Duchamp’s caressible breast in *Please Touch*, one can note the preoccupation in surrealist exhibition design with dissolving perspectival distance and involving the visitor in a participatory, multi-sensory relationship with the objects on display. See, for example, Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, MIT, Cambridge, Mass., 2001, 83.

<sup>45</sup> This period of exploration during his ban from film-making, culminated in Švankmajer’s book *Hmat a imaginace: Uvod do taktlního umění (Touch and the Imagination)*, Kozoroh, Prague, 1994. It also generated a body of plastic works and found its way into a number of Švankmajer’s films. See also Eva and Jan Švankmajer, *Anima Animus Animace*, Slovart Nadace Arbor Vitae, Prague, 1998, esp. Section V.



<sup>46</sup> Švankmajer rarely speaks of phenomenology as an inspiration. He is, however, fully immersed in a culture in which such interests were present, and as a dominant member of the Prague surrealist group, is intensely aware of the closely allied surrealist position on perception.

<sup>47</sup> Švankmajer, *Anima Animus Animace*, 85 (author's translation).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* Švankmajer's other adaptation of a Poe story, *Kyvadlo, jáma a naděje* of 1983 (based on 'The Pit and the Pendulum') uses similar techniques.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Švankmajer, *Hmat a imaginace*, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Švankmajer, *Anima Animus Animace*. Švankmajer refers specifically to Merleau-Ponty's conclusions on the neurological studies by Goldstein. See, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1962, 119. Švankmajer's frequent references to synaesthesia, and particularly vision-touch synaesthesia, seem to spring from this understanding.

<sup>52</sup> Švankmajer, *Hmat a imaginace*, 109.

<sup>53</sup> Švankmajer, *Anima Animus Animace*, 85 (author's translation).

<sup>54</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind,' *The Primacy of Perception*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1964, 165.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>57</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 316-7 (my emphasis). In a similar vein Dalibor Vesely remarks on the 'communication of different kinds and modalities of experience,' which 'takes place in the pre-reflective sphere of our life,' *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*, MIT, Cambridge, Mass., 2004, 82.

<sup>58</sup> In these circumstances, Merleau-Ponty says, 'in recollections, we touch the object with parts of our body which have never actually been in contact with it' (so each contact leads to a 'contact' with the whole body), *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 315-7. He saw bodily exploratory movement and also time during which this movement takes place as the phenomenal component of tactile data. The medium of film has a unique ability to represent both of these elements. He also noted the resistance of touch to become objectified in the way that vision can. While in vision it is possible to see everything and be everywhere, touch is inseparable from the situated body.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>60</sup> Švankmajer worked on this film with the animator Bedřich Glaser, who would become a frequent collaborator. However, in this case he himself animated the clay. 'Švankmajer on the *Fall of the House of Usher*,' 36-37. He considers this sequence a key one in both the story and the film, as it introduces madness. He called it an analogy within an analogy.

<sup>61</sup> Švankmajer, *Hmat a imaginace*, 195-9. Švankmajer also relates how during the filming of the sequence, the gestures were constantly slowed down by the animation technique, instead of being enacted all at once in one relieving action. The slowing down of tension, however, caused an intensification of stress, which built up into cramps in his fingers. The whole animation led to his considerable emotional exhaustion.

<sup>62</sup> The sense of hearing plays an important role in the Poe story and equally, the soundtrack provides an essential dimension to Švankmajer's film. While the key area of sound is beyond the scope of this



paper, one may say that the filmmaker generally rejects naturalism in sound in favour of a deliberately artificial, oneiric soundscape that contributes to the evocation of atmosphere and heightening of experience. Often a collage of sound fragments, the soundtrack works through analogy. The Usher mansion itself, for example, has many voices. Sounds are sometimes multivalent and ambiguous, evoking several meanings at the same time, as when a repeating banging sound which accompanies Madeline's moving coffin is gradually recognized as both the hammering of nails from the outside, and her desperate beating from inside. The soundtrack operates on similar principles to the assemblage of the visual imagery of the film, helping to evoke the topography of a disturbed imagination.

<sup>63</sup> Extreme corporeal distress is also suggested in the film through the tactile analogies of the apparently spontaneous crushing of wood and ripping apart of metal sheeting. In one animated sequence, the wooden handle of the hammer, which had nailed shut Madeline's coffin and is associated with Usher, disintegrates into a pile of splinters, while the coffin effectively explodes. It is interesting that the tactile analogies are achieved through animation.

<sup>64</sup> These themes would become central to his later feature films, *Spiklenci slasti* (*Conspirators of Pleasure*) and *Šílení* (*Lunacy*). The making of the film also left a lasting mark on the Švankmajer's own life. It was while searching for an appropriately atmospheric location for the shoot that he and his artist wife Eva came across the estate in Horní Staňkov in Southern Bohemia, which over the next twenty-five years they would transform into their 'ideal palace,' and where they would build their *Kunstkammer*.

<sup>65</sup> See for example Thomas Mical, ed., *Surrealism and Architecture*, Routledge, London, 2005, and Jane Alison, ed., *The Surreal House*, Exhibition Catalogue, Barbican Art Gallery and Yale University Press, London, c. 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Chapters 12 and 16 in Thomas Mical, ed., *Surrealism and Architecture*, Routledge, London, 2005, exemplify such a somewhat superficial approach.

<sup>67</sup> See for example endnote 1. Quotation reproduced at beginning of this article. Surrealism's rejection of the merely aesthetic is already evident in the 1924 manifesto. See André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1972, 26.

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